

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 LISBON 0261

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJECT: PORTUGAL'S PARTIES FACE THE FUTURE: THE POPULAR

DEMOCRATS

REF: LISBON 0143 (DTG 090645Z JAN 76)

SUMMARY: THE PPD HAS FAR GREATER CONFIDENCE IN ITS PRESENT
AND FUTURE STRENGTH AND IN ITS INDISPENSABILITY TO THE AZEVEDO
GOVERNMENT AS A RESULT OF THE ABORTIVE NOV 25 COUP. THE POPULAR
DEMOCRATS' INCREASED CONFIDENCE AND CLOSER TIES WITH "OPERATIONAL"
MILITARY AND HAVE EMBOLDENED THE PARTY TO CHALLENGE THE DESIRE OF
THE POLITICAL MILITARY TO REMAIN ACTIVE IN POLITICS AND TO
IMPLANT SOCIALISM. FOLLOWING A SPLIT WITH PARTY'S LEFT WING, A
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MORE UNITED PPD HAS DECIDED THAT IT MUST MOVE TO CAPITALIZE ON

THE SWING TO RIGHT IN THE PORTUGUESE ELECTORATE.
SHOULD THIS VIEW BE ACCURATE, THE PPD COULD
EMERGE FROM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS AS PORTUGAL'S LARGEST
PARTY. THE PPD WILL FIGHT UNTIL THEN TO REDUCE MILITARY ROLE IN
POLITICS, AND TO MINIMIZE COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT
AND COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN OTHER SECTORS. END SUMMARY.

1. BACKGROUND-STATUS PRE-NOVEMBER 25:

(A) THE POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPD) DEMONSTRATED ITS STRENGTH
AS PORTUGAL'S SECOND PARTY IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS
OF APRIL 25, 1975, WHEN IT RECEIVED 1.5 MILLION VOTES--26.4
PERCENT OF VOTES CAST. THE PPD FINISHED FIRST--OR A CLOSE
SECOND--IN THE NORTH, IN THE ISLANDS, AND IN THE ALGARVE, BUT DID
POORLY IN LISBON AND THE ALENTEJO. THE PPD HAD BEEN THE SECOND
LARGEST PARTY IN THE AZEVEDO CABINET WITH TWO MINISTRIES AND
NINE SECRETARIES OF STATE.

(B) IN THE MONTHS IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO NOVEMBER 25, THE PPD WAS
OCCUPIED
DEFENDING ITSELF, ITS "SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC"
PROGRAM, AND THE AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT. THE PARTY WAS UNEASY
ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN BY COMMUNISTS AND OTHERS ON THE LEFT
TO EXCLUDE THE "REACTIONARY" PPD FROM GOVERNMENT.
FIGHTING BACK, THE PPD COOPERATED WITH THE SOCIALISTS IN ORGANIZING
MASSIVE DEMONSTRATIONS OF SUPPORT FOR THE AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT
AND WELCOMED THE GOVERNMENT'S "STRIKE" IN NOVEMBER AS NECESSARY
TO PROVOKE A DECISIVE POLITICAL CLARIFICATION.
IN THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, THE PPD MOST OFTEN COMBINED
WITH THE SOCIALISTS AND AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS ON
POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES, WHILE ARGUING THAT THE ASSEMBLY
ADOPTED UNREALISTIC, MARXIST CONCEPTS ON SOME ISSUES SUCH AS
WORKER CONTROL OF MANAGEMENT.

2. NOVEMBER 25 COUP-WHAT IT MEANT FOR THE PARTY AND WHY:

(A) AS A RESULT OF THE NOVEMBER 25 COUP, THE PPD HAS FAR GREATER
CONFIDENCE IN ITS FUTURE AND IN THE STABILITY OF THE AZEVEDO
GOVERNMENT. PPD'S INCREASED SELF-CONFIDENCE CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO
SEVERAL CAUSES:

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--CONFIRMATION THAT ITS READING OF LEFTIST INTENTIONS WAS
CORRECT;

--SATISFACTION THAT LEFTIST STRENGTH WAS LESS THAN EXPECTED;

--CONFIDENCE THAT ANTI-COMMUNIST AND ANTI-LEFTIST MEASURES

ARE FINALLY BEING IMPLEMENTED;

--BELIEF THAT IT HAD A ALLY IN THE "OPERATIONAL" MILITARY,
WHO SHARED THE PPD'S VIEW OF THE MILITARY'S ROLE AND OF THE
POLITICAL FUTURE;

--GREATER CONFIDENCE THAT THE AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT CAN ENDURE
UNTIL SPRING ELECTIONS, WHEN THE PPD BELIEVES IT WILL DO WELL
AND THE COMMUNISTS WILL FARE POORLY.

(B) RELIEF FROM THE CRISIS ATMOSPHERE WHICH EXISTED PRIOR TO
NOVEMBER 25, HOWEVER HAS REMOVED SOME OF THE GLUE WHICH HELD
TOGETHER WIDELY DISPARATE ELEMENTS OF THE PPD, AND ENSURED THAT
THE INTERNAL PARTY CRISIS WOULD COME TO A HEAD RAPIDLY.

3. LEADERSHIP AND POLICY CHANGES:

(A) LEADERSHIP: MOST OF THE TOP-LEVEL LEADERS OF PARTY'S LEFT-WING
ABANDONED

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THE PARTY AFTER PPD'S NATIONAL CONGRESS DEC 8. SA CARNEIRO
EMERGED FROM THE CONGRESS AS THE UNCHALLENGED LEADER OF THE
PARTY. MINISTER OF INTERNAL TRADE MAGALHAES MOTA, MINISTER
OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS RUI MACHETE, AND ASSEMBLY LEADER BARBOSA DE
MELO RANK SECOND, THIRD, AND FOURTHAMONG PARTY LEADERSHIP, AND
ARE HIGHLY RESPECTED INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE PARTY. SA CARNEIRO
ADMITS THAT THE LACK OF LEADERSHIP BELOW THE TOP FOUR IS A
PROBLEM. HOWEVER, THE PPD SHOULD FUNCTION MORE SMOOTHLY
WITHOUT THE BELABORED COMPROMISES AMONG COMPETING FACTIONS WHICH
USED TO BE REQUIRED. THE PARTY'S CURRENT LEADERS ARE QUITE CON-
SERVATIVE; ONLY A DETERMINED EFFORT BY REMAINING LIBERALS
WILL MAKE THEIR VOICES HEARD.

(B) POLICY: SA CARNEIRO NOW FACES NO EFFECTIVE CHALLENGE TO
HIS CONCEPT THAT THE PPD MUST DIRECT ITS ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN
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TOWARD CAPTURING THE RIGHT, SINCE PARTY LEADERS VIEW PORTUGAL
AS HEADING IN THAT DIRECTION.

A THEME HEARD FREQUENTLY IN THE PARTY NOW IS THAT THE PPD'S GREATEST
SERVICE TO THE PORTUGUESE LEFT WOULD BE TO SAVE PORTUGAL FROM
A SLIDE INTO THE RIGHT-WING AUTHORITARIANISM. IN ORDER TO
"PERFORM SUCH A SERVICE," THE PPD MUST REINFORCE ITS CREDI-
BILITY WITH A PORTUGUESE PEOPLE DISPOSED TO OPT FOR AUTHORIT-
ARIAN SOLUTIONS. WHILE THE PPD WILL NOT FORMALLY REPUDIATE ITS
SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC PLATFORM, PARTY LEADERS CAN BE EXPECTED TO
EMPHASIZE ONLY SELECTED ELEMENTS.

SA CARNEIRO HAS RECENTLY EMPHASIZED THAT THE
PEOPLE SHOULD BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE WHETHER THEY
WANT SOCIALISM, AND AT WHAT PACE. HE HAS ALSO STEPPED UP
ATTACKS ON THE "GUIDED SOCIALISM" OF MELO ANTUNES AND THE
"POLITICAL" MILITARY, AND ON THE "SOCIAL MARXISM" OF THE SOCIALIST
PARTY. AN AGGRESSIVE STANCE TOWARD THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND ITS
ALLIES WILL REMAIN AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE PPD'S APPEAL
TO THE CENTER AND THE RIGHT.

(C) PARTICIPATION IN GOVERNMENT: THE PPD CONSIDERS IT EXTREMELY
IMPORTANT THAT THE AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT BE REORGANIZED IN SUCH A
WAY THAT IT ENDURES UNTIL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS ARE
HELD IN THE SPRING. THE PPD WISHES TO CONTINUE IN THE GOVERNMENT
BECAUSE, ON BALANCE, IT SEE POLITICAL ADVANTAGE IN
RETAINING ITS IMAGE OF A LARGE AND RESPONSIBLE PARTY.

THE PPD IS CONFIDENT THAT ARMED FORCES AND PS NOW CONSIDER
PPD PARTICIPATION IN AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT ESSENTIAL.

(D) THE PPD HAS MAINTAINED ITS OPPOSITION IN
PRINCIPLE TO PARTICIPATION OF THE PCP BUT AGREED
TO COMMUNIST PARTICIPATION IF CONDITIONS WERE MET, INCLUDING:

RAPID RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT; DISMANTLEMENT
OF PCP POWER BASES IN MEDIA, TRADE UNIONS AND BUREAUCRACY;
AND MEASURES TO PREVENT PCP SABOTAGE OF GOVERNMENT.
THE PPD CAN BE EXPECTED TO INSIST THAT THE PCP NOT BE PERMITTED TO
CRITICIZE GOVERNMENT OR AUSTERITY PROGRAM WHILE A MEMBER OF
GOVERNMENT. WHETHER IT WILL BE SUCCESSFUL IS ANOTHER STORY.

4. THE PARTY AND THE MILITARY:

(A) SA CARNEIRO AND THE PPD STRONGLY SUPPORT A RETURN OF THE
MILITARY TO THE BARRACKS. THROUGHOUT THE 1974/75 PERIOD, THE PPD
MADE A NUMBER OF TACTICAL CONCESSIONS ON PRINCIPLE OF
MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS FOR FEAR OF JEOPARDIZING
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ITS OWN EXISTENCE AS A PARTY, OR IN INTEREST OF ADDRESSING
GREATER COMMUNIST THREAT. SA CARNEIRO, UPON HIS RETURN TO THE
PARTY LAST SEPTEMBER, STATED THAT HE DID NOT AGREE WITH, AND WOULD
NOT HAVE MADE SOME OF THESE CONCESSIONS. IN THE CHANGED CIR-
CUMSTANCES AFTER NOVEMBER 25, THE PPD FEELS BETTER ABLE TO
INSIST UPON REDUCED MILITARY PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS.

(B) THE PPD WAS IN THE PAST RATHER ISOLATED FROM MILITARY IN
POSITIONS OF POWER. PPD LEADERS COOPERATED CLOSELY WITH THE
"ANTUNES GROUP," BUT ALWAYS SUSPECTED THAT IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES
COULD PROVOKE THE "GROUP" TO DROP THE PPD. IN RECENT MONTHS THE
PPD HAS DEVELOPED CLOSE CONTACTS WITH "OPERATIONAL" MILITARY SUCH
AS NORTHERN REGION COMMANDER PIRES VELOSO. THE PPD HAS STRESSED
THE IDENTITY OF ITS VIEWS WITH THOSE OF "OPERATIONAL" MILITARY
ON ADVISABILITY OF MILITARY RETURN TO BARRACKS AND ON NEED TO
REDUCE COMMUNIST INFLUENCE.

(C) AFM: THE PPD FAVORS REINTEGRATION OF THE AFM INTO THE ARMED
FORCES AS A WHOLE. THE PARTY VIEWS THE CONCEPT OF A SEPARATE AFM
AS A DANGEROUS REMNANT OF "VANGUARD" POLITICAL ROLE ENVISIONED
BY SOME FOR LEFTIST MILITARY IN REVOLUTION. THE PPD VIEWS EFFORTS
TO PRESERVE A SEPARATE AFM AS PART OF THE EFFORT BY "POLITICAL"
MILITARY TO IMPOSE SOCIALISM ON PORTUGUESE PEOPLE, AND AS
THREAT TO PEOPLE'S CAPACITY TO CHOOSE OWN FUTURE IN FREE ELECTIONS.

(D) AFM-PARTIES PACT: PPD LEADERS FAVOR AMENDMENT, BUT NOT
ABROGATION, OF AFM-PARTIES PACT TO FORMALIZE RETURN TO CIVILIAN
GOVERNMENT AND ESTABLISH ARMED FORCES AS THE "PROTECTORS" RATHER

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THAN THE "MOTOR" OF THE REVOLUTION. THE PPD HAS INSISTED ON DIRECT ELECTION OF PRESIDENT AND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, WITH PRESIDENT CHOOSING THE PRIME MINISTER. WHILE THE PPD FAVORS CIVILIAN ELIGIBILITY FOR PRESIDENCY, IT IS WILLING TO YIELD ON THIS POINT, AND SA CARNEIRO HAS INDICATED HIS PARTY MIGHT SUPPORT PRIME MINISTER AZEVEDO FOR THE PRESIDENCY. ABOVE ALL, SA CARNEIRO WANTS TO ASSURE THAT COSTA GOMES NOT REMAIN AS PRESIDENT. THE PPD HAS ALSO PROPOSED A REFERENDUM ON THE NEW CONSTITUTION.

5. THE PARTY AND THE ECONOMY:

(A) THE PPD BLAMES CURRENT ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES ON THE GONCALVES GOVERNMENTS' DISASTROUS POLICIES. TO DATE, THE PPD CONFIDENTIAL

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HAS NOT PUBLISHED ITS OWN ECONOMIC PROPOSALS, BUT HAS ADVOCATED ADEQUATE GUARANTEES FOR NATIONAL AND FOREIGN PRIVATE INVESTMENT. SA CARNEIRO HAS STATED THAT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM WEST OF "MARSHALL-PLAN" PROPORTIONS IS NECESSARY TO REVERSE THE ECONOMIC SITUATION.

(B) THE PPD FAVORS IMPLEMENTATION OF A TOUGH AUSTERITY PROGRAM AND DISCIPLINE IN INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS. WITH A VERY SMALL CONSTITUENCY AMONG URBAN INDUSTRIAL WORKERS THE PPD IS LIKELY TO URGE FIRM WAGE RESTRAINTS. THE PPD WILL SEEK TO PROVIDE GREATER INCENTIVES TO AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION FOR ITS SMALL FARMER CONSTITUENTS. THE MOST INFLUENTIAL FIGURES IN DETERMINING PARTY'S ECONOMIC PROGRAM, MINISTER MAGALHAES MOTA AND DEPUTY ALFREDO DE SOUSA, A CONSERVATIVE ECONOMIST, WILL ADVOCATE A GREATER RETURN TO FREE MARKET FORCES.

6. FUTURE PROSPECTS:

(A) IN THE SHORT RUN UNTIL LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS, THE PPD'S FUTURE AS PORTUGAL'S SECOND LARGEST AND SECOND MOST INFLUENTIAL PARTY APPEARS SECURE. THE STING HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM PCP ATTACKS ON PPD'S LEGITIMACY AND THE PPD BELIEVES IT HAS GAINED AN IMPORTANT ALLY IN THE "OPERATIONAL" MILITARY. SA CARNEIRO HAS STANCHED FURTHER DEFECTIONS FROM THE PARTY, AND HAS EMERGED WITH A MORE UNITED ORGANIZATION FOR THE ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN. HE HAS DEMONSTRATED THE CLEAR SUPPORT OF PARTY MEMBERS FOR HIS POSITION.

(B) THE PPD DOES HAVE PROBLEMS TO OVERCOME, INCLUDING THE RELATIVE LACK OF FIRST-RATE LEADERSHIP SINCE THE DECEMBER PARTY SPLIT. THE PARTY STILL HAS A SHORTAGE OF FUNDS, ALTHOUGH THIS PROBLEM IS LESS ACUTE THAN IN THE PAST. THE PARTY'S ORGANIZATION IS EXCELLENT IN THE NORTH, BUT WEAK IN LISBON AND IN THE SOUTH. IT WILL TAKE A CONSIDERABLE EFFORT FOR THE PPD TO REBUILD A RESPECTABLE BASE OF SUPPORT IN THESE AREAS. THE PPD WILL CONTINUE ITS STRENUEOUS EFFORTS TO EXPAND CONTACTS WITH WESTERN EUROPEAN SOCIALIST PARTIES. HOWEVER, THE PPD'S ACCESS TO FINANCIAL AND MORAL SUPPORT FROM EUROPEAN SOCIALISTS IS SEVERELY LIMITED BY THE EXISTING PS TIES TO THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL.

(C) IN THE LONGER TERM, THE FUTURE OF THE PPD DEPENDS
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VERY MUCH ON THE ACCURACY OF SA CARNEIRO'S BELIEF THAT THE COUNTRY IS MOVING RAPIDLY TO THE RIGHT AND THE PPD'S ABILITY TO CAPITALIZE ON THIS TREND. IF SA CARNEIRO IS CORRECT, AND THERE ARE SEVERAL OPINION POLLS OF UNTESTED RELIABILITY WHICH SUGGEST HE MAY BE, THE PPD COULD EMERGE FROM THE FORTHCOMING ELECTIONS AS PORTUGAL'S LARGEST PARTY. IF SA CARNEIRO IS WRONG, OR IF THE PARTY'S ORGANIZATION FAILS TO HOLD TOGETHER, THE PPD COULD EMERGE FROM ELECTIONS AS A STRICTLY REGIONAL PARTY, WITH EVEN LESS SUPPORT IN LISBON AND THE SOUTH. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT MIGHT FORCE A MERGER OF A WEAKENED PPD WITH THE CDS, OR CAUSE A FRAGMENTATION OF THE PARTY WITH SOME ELEMENTS GOING TO THE CDS AND OTHERS TO THE PS.

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